

Community Collaboration Woodbridge

The Former Country Club
of Woodbridge Master Plan

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT 9/16/25

The Community Collaboration Woodbridge Vision was guided by a diverse group of community stakeholders and Town staff.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen:

Mica Cardozo, First Selectman
Maria Madonick
Sheila McCreven
Steve Munno
Andrea Urbano
David Vogel

TOWN WORKING GROUP

Mica Cardozo, First Selectman
Anthony Genovese, Director of Finance
Karen Crosby, Assistant Administrative Officer
Alison Valsamis, Executive Assistant

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE (TAC)

Sharon de Kadt, Conservation
Diana McCarthy-Bercury, Conservation
Nicole Donzello, CUPOP
Cliff Lynch, Economic Development
Kathy Hunter, Housing
Julie Katz, Recreation
Kristyna Hulland, Agriculture
Pat Madden, Human Services
Hillary Drumm, Sustainability
Tom Kenefick, Sustainability
Al Smith, At-Large Member

FOCUS GROUPS

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Kristine Sullivan, Zoning Enforcement Officer
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Sean Rowland, Fire Chief
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Jeanette Glicksman, Human Services Director
Vonda Tencza, Woodbridge Schools Superintendent
Jennifer Byars, Amity Schools Superintendent
Eric Werthmann, Library Director
Jess Moffo, Animal Control Officer
Mike Marganski, Blight Officer

CONSULTANT TEAM

COOPER ROBERTSON, Master Planning Lead
COURSEY & COMPANY, Public Engagement
NEWMAN ARCHITECTS, Residential Architecture Lead
LANGAN, Civil Engineering & Landscape Architecture
CONSTRUCTION COST SOLUTIONS, LLC, Cost Estimating

BUILDING THE VISION

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A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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REALIZING THE VISION

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Dear Woodbridge Neighbor,

In 2009, the Town of Woodbridge purchased the 155-acre Country Club of Woodbridge property with the goal of ensuring its future would be guided by the community, not outside interests. For several years, the site operated as a public golf course and pool, but declining use and escalating costs made these operations unsustainable. Since then, the land has gone largely untouched, and while many enjoy its natural refuge, the property also presents us with an extraordinary opportunity.

After more than a decade of proposals that did not move forward, we engaged Cooper Robertson, a nationally recognized planning firm, to help us shape a thoughtful and balanced Master Plan. Their work—guided by community feedback, surveys, focus groups, and public meetings—has led to a plan that preserves the majority of the property as green space while creating carefully scaled opportunities for housing, recreation, agriculture, and small-scale hospitality.

Here are the highlights of the preferred plan:

- **Green Space & Recreation:** Over 115 acres will remain as green space, including trails, walking paths, habitat restoration areas, and cultural/educational features such as the historical site information.
- **Housing & Community Needs:** New housing options—senior cottages, townhomes, and assisted living—will provide opportunities for residents to downsize and age in place, while also helping us meet State affordable housing goals.
- **Community & Economic Uses:** Select areas could support a heritage orchard, pavilion for events, and small-scale hospitality such as a boutique inn, restaurant, or brewery.
- **Financial Benefit:** Independent cost-benefit analysis shows this plan could generate nearly \$1.9 million annually in net new tax revenue, easing the burden on homeowners and strengthening our long-term financial sustainability. By contrast, leaving the property entirely undeveloped could cost taxpayers more than \$130,000 annually.
- **Phased Implementation:** The plan includes a step-by-step roadmap—starting with trail improvements and community programming, followed by environmental remediation, and later private investment in housing and hospitality. The Town will also actively pursue grants and partnerships to offset costs.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Woodbridge. As we look to the future, the CCW Master Plan will serve as a guide for aligning public investment with community values. Its success depends on continued engagement and collaboration, and I am committed to ensuring that this remains a living document shaped and guided by your feedback and representative of our residents.

Thank you to every resident who contributed to this effort. I invite you to explore the final plan, and I look forward to working together as we begin to bring its vision to life.

Sincerely,



First Selectman, Town of Woodbridge



BUILDING THE VISION

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT 9/10/25



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of Woodbridge Master Plan

What Is Community Collaboration Woodbridge?

In 2024, the Town of Woodbridge was awarded a \$132,000 BAR (Brownfield Area-wide Revitalization) Planning Grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) for assessment and planning of the 155-acre Town-owned property that was formerly the Country Club of Woodbridge. The described goal was to create a unified, comprehensive vision for the future of the site.

The grant application spoke of a vision that would “embody the optimal balance between economic benefit and social responsibility, effectively addressing the needs of both the Town and the region.” It identified several key components to be included in the study:

- identifying development options for the site
- how remediation and abatement efforts can complement future uses of the area
- determining the appropriate mix of uses for the site
- exploring incorporation of recreational opportunities
- identifying environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas that require special attention and protection in the development process and
- promoting transit-oriented development

Upon receipt of the grant, the Town of Woodbridge issued an RFP and selected Cooper Robertson, together with Langan, Newman Architects, and Coursey & Co. for public engagement, to develop a Vision for the utilization of the site to promote the financial sustainability and vitality of the Town.

***Envisioning a sustainable future
where Woodbridge thrives—
balancing nature, community,
and opportunity.***

The Town of Woodbridge then embarked on a yearlong, transparent, and collaborative process, engaging Woodbridge residents through open houses, surveys, and conversations; analyzing market conditions, site conditions and constraints; and developing land use options and potential allocations of program based on site and financial analysis and community, stakeholder, and steering committee input. Monthly presentations and discussions, held for the most part during regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Selectmen, were open to the public, recorded, and available for viewing on the Town website. Residents were given the opportunity to provide input via email, mail, or during the public comment period of each Board meeting.

The vision remains true to the goals put forth by the Town of Woodbridge at the outset of the project: a comprehensive plan for the future of the former Country Club that is designed to support the long-term economic, environmental, and social sustainability of the property and the Town. It balances the varied desires expressed by the community and stakeholders: a strong emphasis on natural, wooded areas and trails, and a similarly strong desire to address some of the Town and the region's significant need for housing, especially workforce and senior housing. The Master Plan proposes rezoning the site to allow for redevelopment in specific, limited areas while maintaining the majority of the property as woodlands and meadows for passive recreation and ecological benefit. It addresses the need for remediation, demolition of derelict structures, public safety improvements, and accessibility. In all, it offers an equitable, sustainable, fiscally responsible, and maintainable vision for future for the property.

What the Vision Offers

This Vision Plan provides a Comprehensive Land Use Strategy, together with Guiding Principles for the site, a series of site-wide recommendations for future actions, and a set of area-specific land use recommendations. Additionally, an Implementation Roadmap lays out the steps to bring this plan to fruition over the next 6 years.

An Illustrative Plan demonstrates one potential allocation of program on the site in accordance with the proposed rezoning. This hypothetical Illustrative Plan is accompanied by Cost-Benefit Analysis. Two alternate scenarios with development are also included in the Cost-Benefit Analysis, as well as one no-development scenario.

What the Vision Is NOT

The Vision Plan is not suitable or appropriate for use as a development plan, but rather is a framework intended to assist the Town in implementation. No land use changes or commitments are being made as a result of this plan.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN BUILDING THE VISION?

The Vision is built from the input of a broad spectrum of residents, stakeholders, Town leaders and staff members, community organizations, and elected officials.

This team effort included:

- monthly public meetings with the Board of Selectmen
- two public Open Houses
- individual stakeholder conversations
- focus groups with Town staff
- consultations with the Technical Assistance Committee

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Sharon de Kadt, Conservation
Diana McCarthy-Bercury, Conservation
Nicole Donzello, CUPOP
Cliff Lynch, Economic Development
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Jess Moffo, Animal Control Officer
Mike Marganski, Blight Officer

PHASE 1: MASTER PLAN

Fall-Winter 2024

Physical & Economic Analysis
Opportunities & Challenges
Community Engagement

Winter-Spring 2024-25

Project Vision
Guiding Principles
Initial Concepts
Plan Testing

Spring-Summer 2025

Cost-Benefit Analysis
Land Use Recommendations
Plan Refinement
Implementation Strategies
Final Documentation

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION

Fall 2025

Design Guidelines
Request for Expressions of Interest
Zoning Overlay

ANALYSIS

OPTIONS

PREFERRED
PLAN

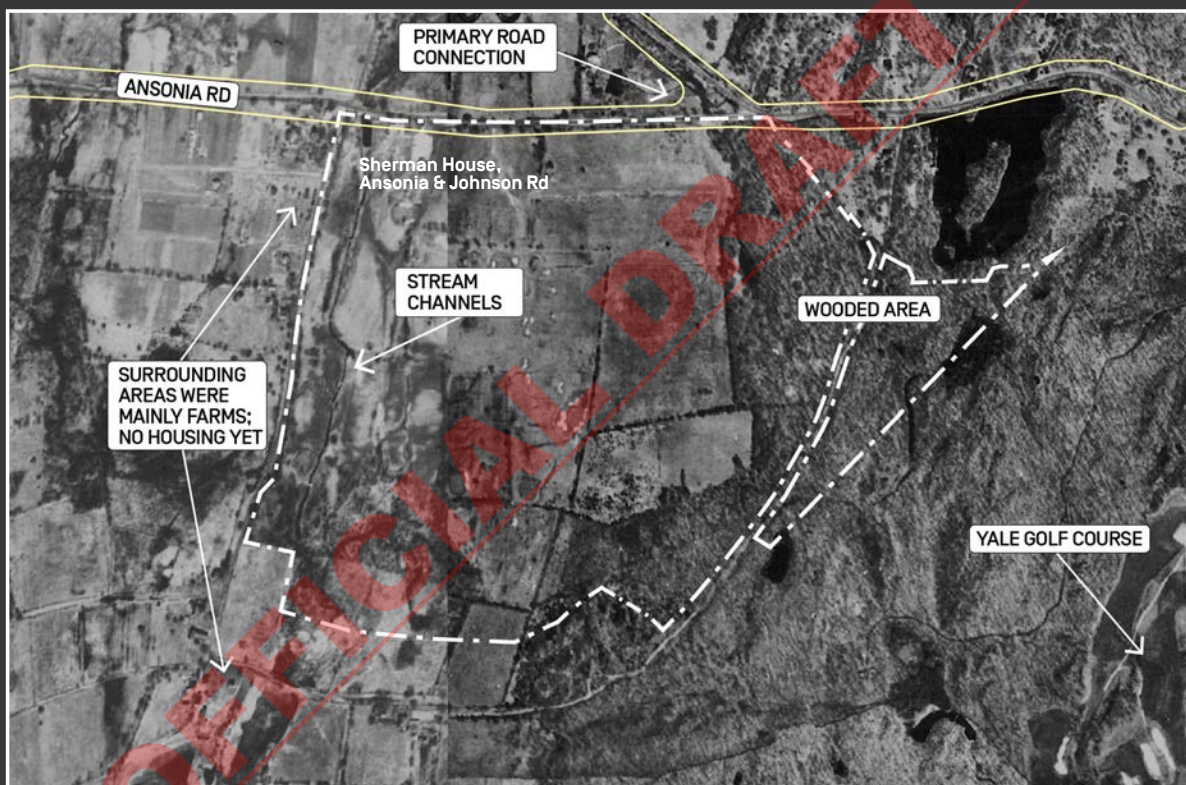
LEGISLATIVE
ADOPTION

Site Background & History

This 152-acre site has been an important part of Woodbridge for many years, with former uses including a farm, a golf course, and a place for residents to experience the natural beauty of the landscape.

- The site has a long history as an active agricultural property, including time as a farm belonging to Robert Sherman.
- The Country Club was founded in the 1930's, and added amenities over the years to include a club house, a pool and sports courts.
- The Town acquired the property in 2009 and continued operations of the golf course until 2016.

Early History



The earliest aerial imagery of the site show its use as agricultural land, including many of the surrounding areas. Major regional connections such as Ansonia Road can also be seen.



Rimmon & Beecher Rd, 1913



Sunnyside Farms, 1930



Roger Sherman Farm, 1935

Golf Course & Country Club



1940s



1970s



1970s



2000s

The Country Club first opened in the 1930's. In the 1970s, new amenities like tennis courts and pool created gathering places for residents. It continued to operate as an 18-hole course after the 2009 town acquisition until closure in 2016.

Town Acquisition

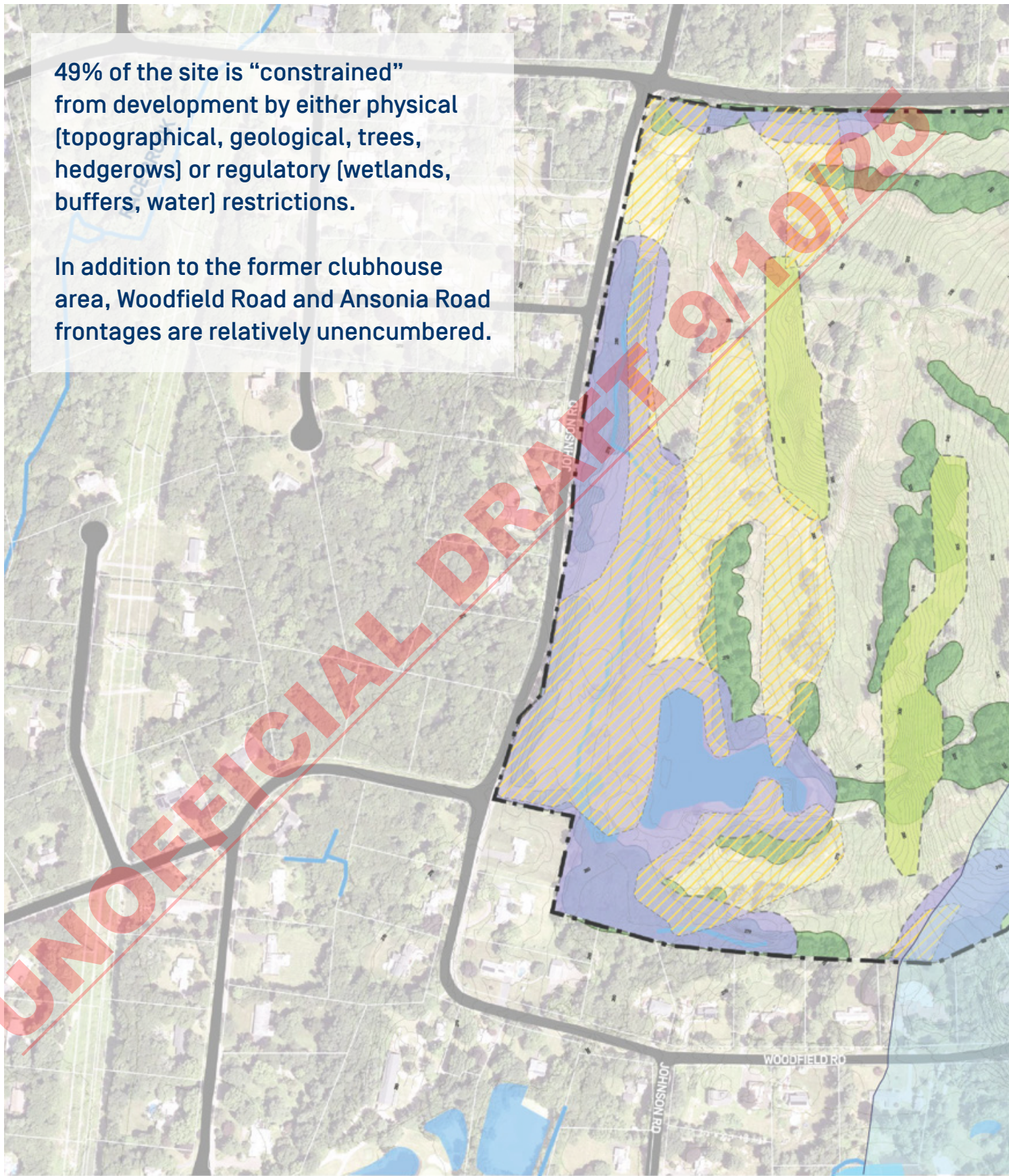


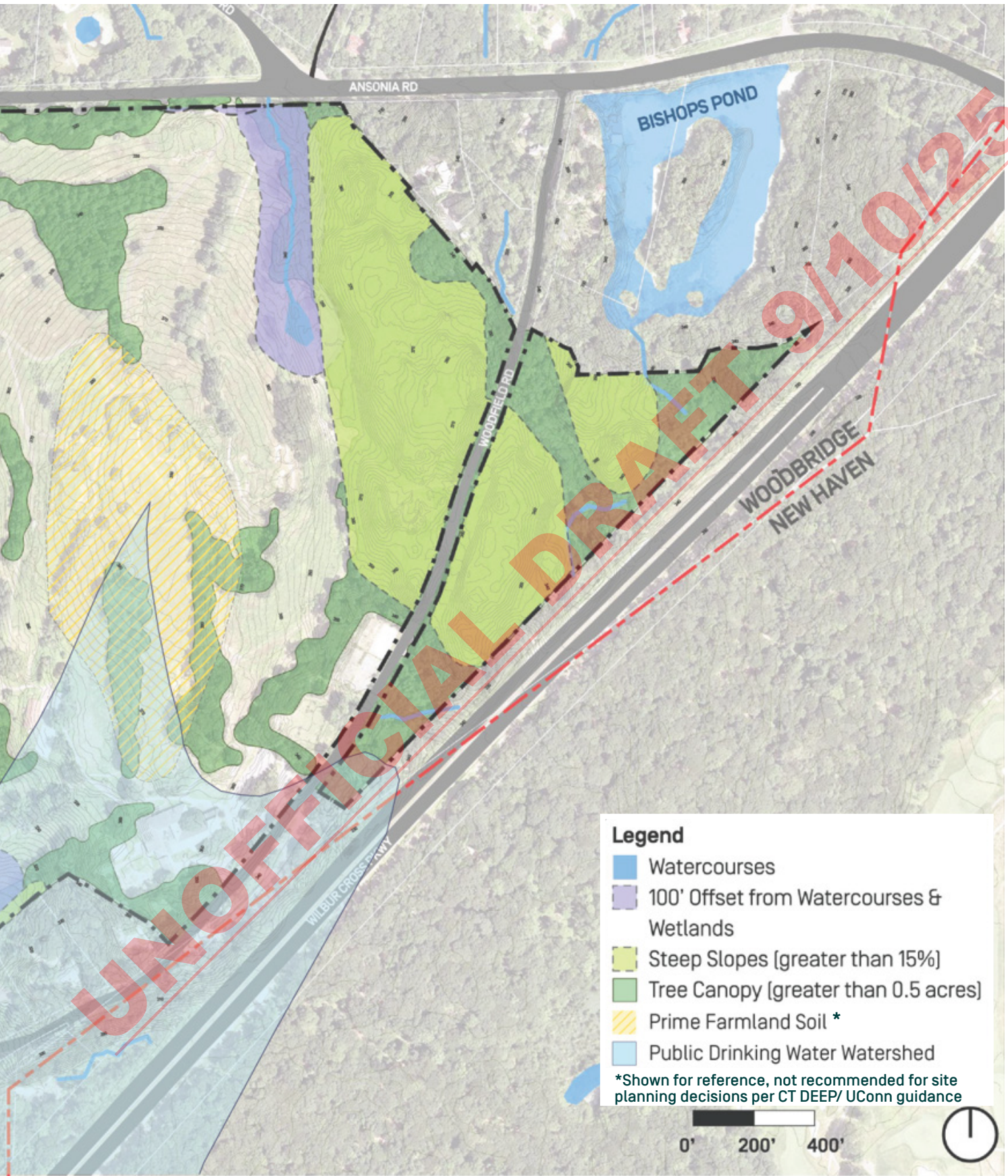
Since the Town's acquisition, the site has been largely undisturbed. The former golf course occupies the majority of the site, and has begun showing new landscape growth. Many of the paved paths remain in use as walking trails.

Site Constraints

49% of the site is “constrained” from development by either physical [topographical, geological, trees, hedgerows] or regulatory [wetlands, buffers, water] restrictions.

In addition to the former clubhouse area, Woodfield Road and Ansonia Road frontages are relatively unencumbered.

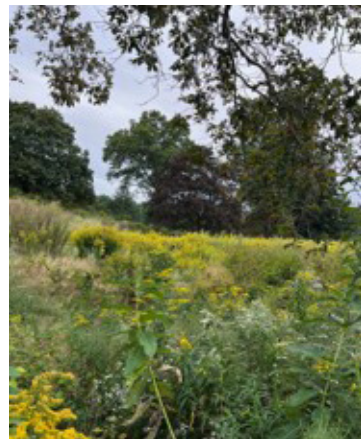


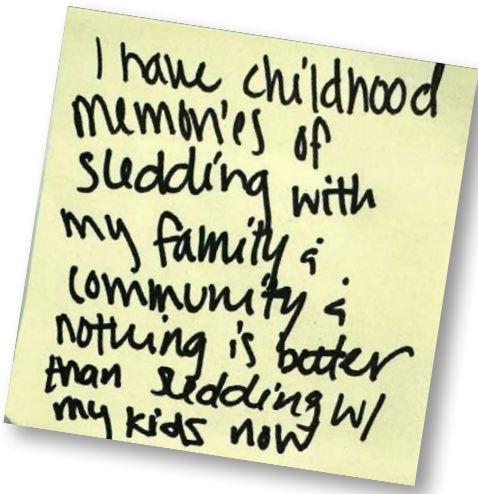


Site Analysis

The site includes areas of steep slope, dense forest, fairways becoming meadows, water courses and ponds, derelict structures and deteriorating cart paths.

It has become a beloved place to engage with nature in a variety of ways: walking, sledding, hiking, biking, quiet contemplation, and birdwatching.





Natural Environment

Since the golf course was closed, the site has begun to become “wild,” with fairways becoming meadows, and birds and other wildlife beginning to occupy the space. Without public investment, the landscape has become plagued by invasive plants and encumbered by deteriorating cart paths, old foundations and structures, and areas in need of remediation.

Although there are specific locations that require remediation, a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) found no significant environmental risk factors, citing existing environmental conditions are consistent with former site uses.

Utilities & Infrastructure

The site is connected to the public water supply through a private pump system and has sewer access via the Woodfield Road line, which extends to the clubhouse. Both are likely in need of full replacement.

Existing vehicular access is limited. Residents expressed concerns of increased traffic along Ansonia Road during peak hours.

Current Zoning

USES	Reference	
Residential, Single-Family	3.3.CC.1	P
Residential, Two-Family		
-when in public water supply watershed	3.3.CC.1 3.4.C	SE
-when not in public water supply watershed AND	3.3.CC.1 3.4.C	
SERVED by public water and public sewer		P
NOT SERVED by public water and public sewer		S
Residential, Multi-Family Dwellings in accordance with Section 3.4	3.4.D	
-when in public water supply watershed		
-when not in public water supply watershed		SE

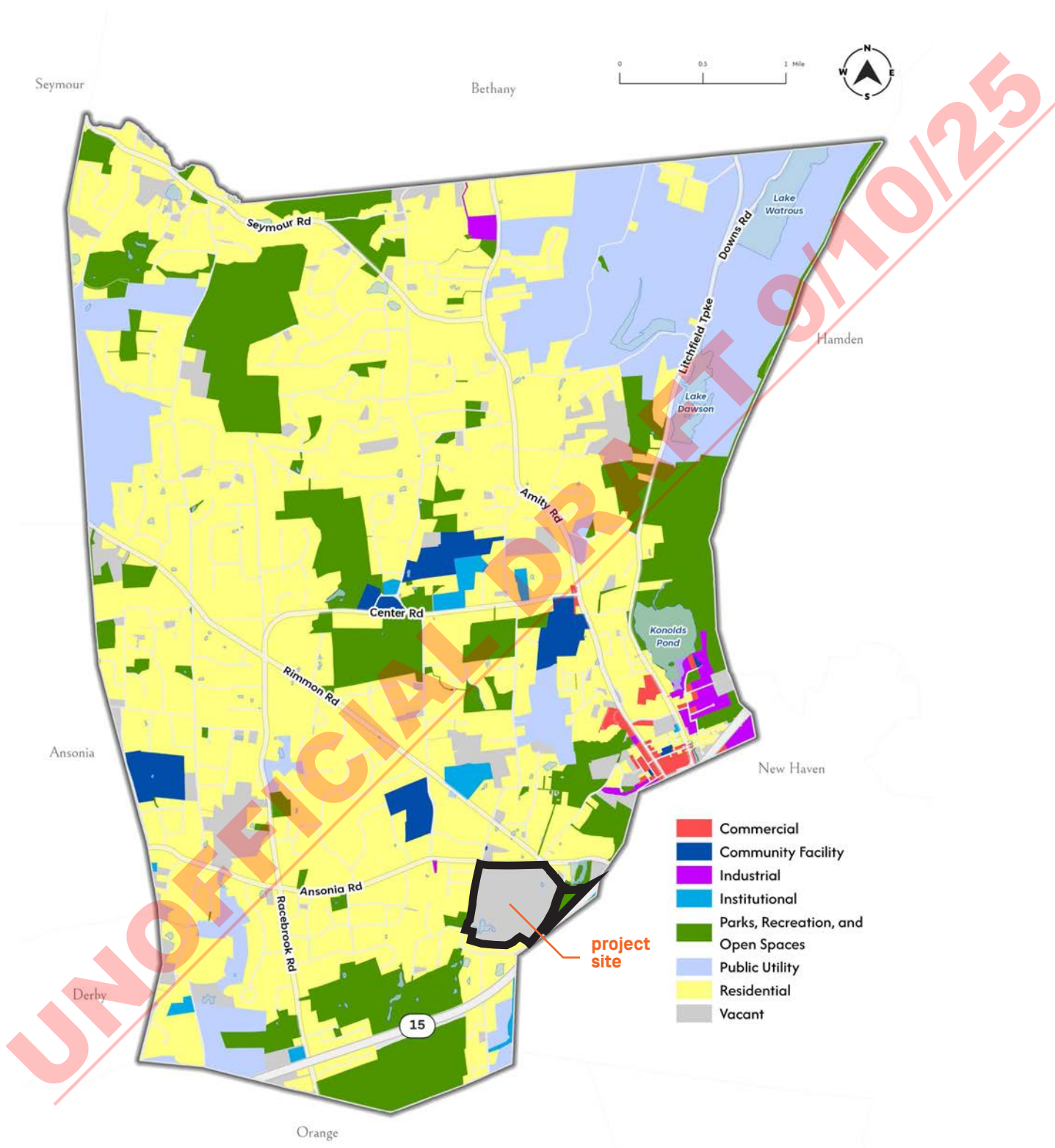
Residential A

For single-family, minimum 1.5 acre residential lots permitted with zoning permit (see chart at left).

Opportunity housing for multi-family dwelling requires access to public water and sewer and TPZ special exception permit. Multifamily is not permitted within the public drinking water watershed (which includes a portion of the former clubhouse area).

P - Zoning Permit Only S-Site Plan Application SE- Special Exception Application

Town of Woodbridge: Current Land Use



Source: Town of Woodbridge; SCRCOG; SLR

Market Potential

Pairing Market Data with Community Desires

A review of demographic and market data revealed strong potential for multifamily and senior housing, with moderate potential for single family - particularly smaller unit types; hospitality - particularly smaller, boutique offerings; and experiential commercial/ retail such as agricultural tourism, winery, brewery, or beer garden that can take advantage of the unique setting and landscape.

Woodbridge Demographics: Quick Facts

Woodbridge's population grew by 1.1% over the last decade to 9,087 [2020]. Projections suggest a stable population for Woodbridge through 2035.

The Town's median household income was \$190,536 in 2022, more than double that of SCRCOG [\$83,617] and the State [\$90,213]. 84.5% of households in Woodbridge make \$100,000 or more annually, with 45.7% making over \$200,000 annually.

	Commercial / Retail - General	Commercial / Retail - Experiential	Multifamily - General	Multifamily - Senior Living	Single Family	Hospitality
Market Potential	Limited Potential	Moderate Potential	Strong Potential	Strong Potential	Moderate Potential	Moderate Potential
Considerations	Retail will be most likely to succeed along existing commercial corridors. New construction for retail is expected to be limited in the near term.	Experiential retail, including agricultural tourism, can overcome locational challenges when paired with complementary land uses. The site's size and natural conditions could be the basis for a unique retail experience.	Strong regional demand is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Demand has been demonstrated throughout the region, including nearby smaller communities.	Strong regional demand is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Services like open space access, shared amenity spaces, and wraparound medical care increase competitiveness for these product types.	Demand is expected to continue, despite upward cost pressures and affordability challenges Smaller unit types, including "missing middle" products like two-family homes and cottages can meet affordability gaps and balance the product mix locally.	Growth in hospitality across the state has returned to pre-pandemic levels, signaling a healthy market for new hotels. Smaller boutique hotels with unique offerings and experiences are expected to increase in popularity.

Community Engagement

Community at the Center of the Process

The consultant team, in partnership with the Town of Woodbridge, conducted extensive stakeholder engagement to capture community feedback to inform the Community Collaboration Woodbridge Vision. The engagement process included a variety of touchpoints and engagement opportunities, each designed for Woodbridge stakeholders to express their views and imagine the future of the riverfront. Engagement was conducted with individual stakeholders, community organizations, focus groups, technical advisors, Selectmen (at meetings open to the public as well as recorded and posted), and via public open houses and online surveys. The work was also coordinated with the POCD process; both came to similar conclusions around the community's varied desires for housing and open space.

The Town of Woodbridge was invited to share their thoughts and learn more about the process and the Plan at two Open Houses. The first was held on February 26, 2025. Site analysis was presented, including a variety of topics: Land Use & Zoning, Historical Context, Recreation & Community Amenities, Natural Environment, and Utilities & Infrastructure. Community input about future uses of the site was solicited at the Open House and online.

At a second Open House on April 2, 2025, further analysis, a synopsis of community feedback, and potential land uses and site plan test fits were presented, followed by open conversation and an online survey.

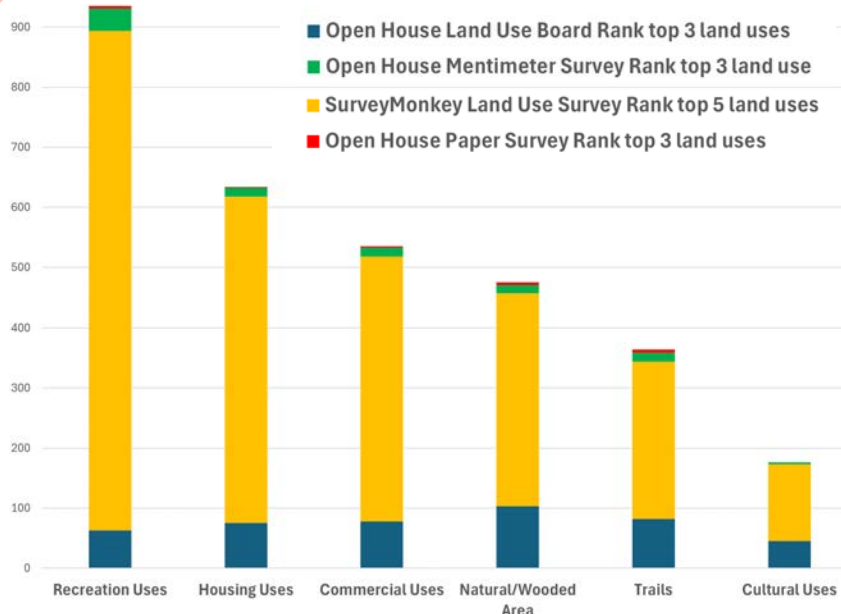
The consultant team consulted with the project's Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) at key points in the process, as well as with focus groups made up of relevant city staff. The team also held one-on-one meetings with community organizations and individual stakeholders throughout the spring of 2025.

The Master Plan process was also regularly updated on the Town website, and the Town kept the community informed via newsletters throughout the process. Online surveys were hosted on the Town website, and paper copies were available at civic sites around town.

Collected input from hundreds of stakeholders to inform the Vision

Many community members felt strongly about maintaining meadows and forests on at least a portion of the property, while some advocated for revenue generation, housing, hospitality, and/or restaurants.

LAND USE PREFERENCES



Community Engagement Dashboard

14,772 TOWN EMAIL INTERACTIONS*

1,500+ POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT**

7 SELECTMEN MEETINGS

3 TAC MEETINGS

88 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

32 NEIGHBOR INTERVIEWS

2 COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

705 ROUND 1 SURVEY RESPONSES

650 ROUND 2 SURVEY RESPONSES

* Number of CCW-related town emails opened by recipients

**Direct meeting / open house attendance, survey responses, stakeholder interviews



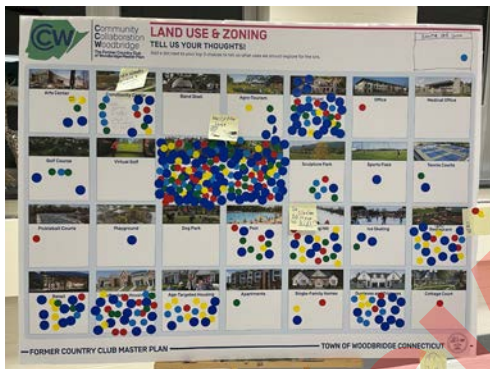
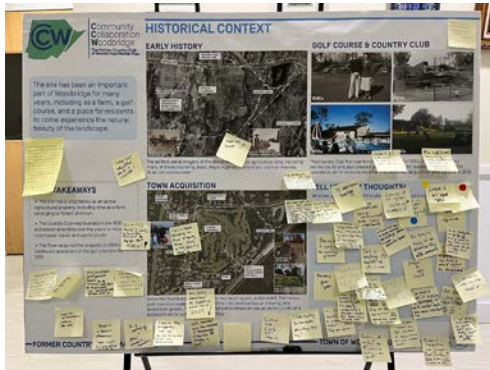
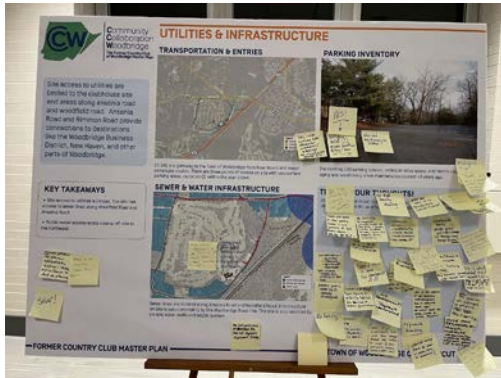
The first Open House was held on February 26, 2025, and garnered input from some 250 attendees.



Feedback indicated a wide range of preferences for the site, from all open space to a mix of recreation, residential, and commercial uses.



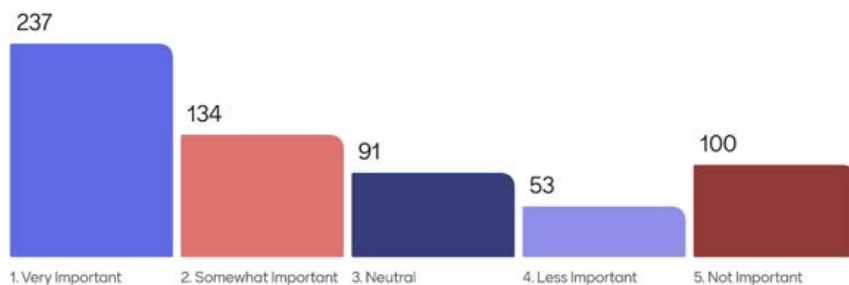
The community was also invited to attend events such as a the Technical Assistance Committee Site Walk on February 26, 2025.



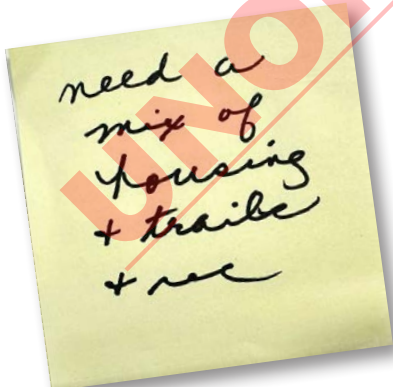
The first Open House was well-attended, and drew varied and robust input from residents on a range of topics.

Mentimeter

How important is it that town investment in maintenance, restoration, or amenities be offset by revenue-generating uses, i.e. housing or hospitality?



Out of 650 respondents to the second survey, 60% felt it was somewhat or very important to offset town investment in the site with revenue-generating uses.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles are a foundational element of the Master Plan.

- **Assist in evaluation of alternatives.**
- **Ensure the Plan is developed from broad ranging and inclusive values.**
- **Allow for the plan to remain adaptable and relevant over time.**

1 Pursue Sustainability at the Highest Level

1. Prioritize environmental stewardship by enhancing the site's most valuable natural areas and sensitive landscapes.
2. Identify opportunities for sustainable and resilient land management practices to support long-term ecological health and climate mitigation benefits.
3. Preserve local natural hydrological functions and ensure responsible stewardship of local watersheds.
4. Incorporate energy-efficient and low-impact design strategies in any potential controlled development.

2 Ensure Thoughtful & Contextual Design

1. Maintain the distinctive character and charm of Woodbridge.
2. Reflect Woodbridge's rich agricultural heritage.
3. Ensure future site uses align with town and state's planning goals.

3 Support Community Needs & Well-Being

1. Create an environmentally responsible and economically viable balance of green space, recreation, and controlled development (i.e., housing, hospitality, retail) that serve a broad range of community needs.
2. Expand recreational and cultural opportunities through a diversity of multi-use and multi-generational passive and active recreation opportunities and community-serving uses.
3. Provide diverse, multi-use and multi-generational recreational options that complement local and regional offerings.
4. Prioritize public access throughout the site and to off-site destinations.

4 Promote Economic & Fiscal Responsibility

1. Develop a phased plan that can be implemented incrementally on fiscally responsible terms.
2. Ensure that any potential controlled development generates long-term economic benefits and does not overly burden taxpayers.
3. Identify opportunities for external funding sources, including grants and partnerships, to support infrastructure and site improvements.

Land Use Studies and Test Fits

Subsequent to the Analysis & Discovery phase of the project, a series of land use studies and test fits were developed, incorporating the findings of the site analysis, market research, and community engagement processes.

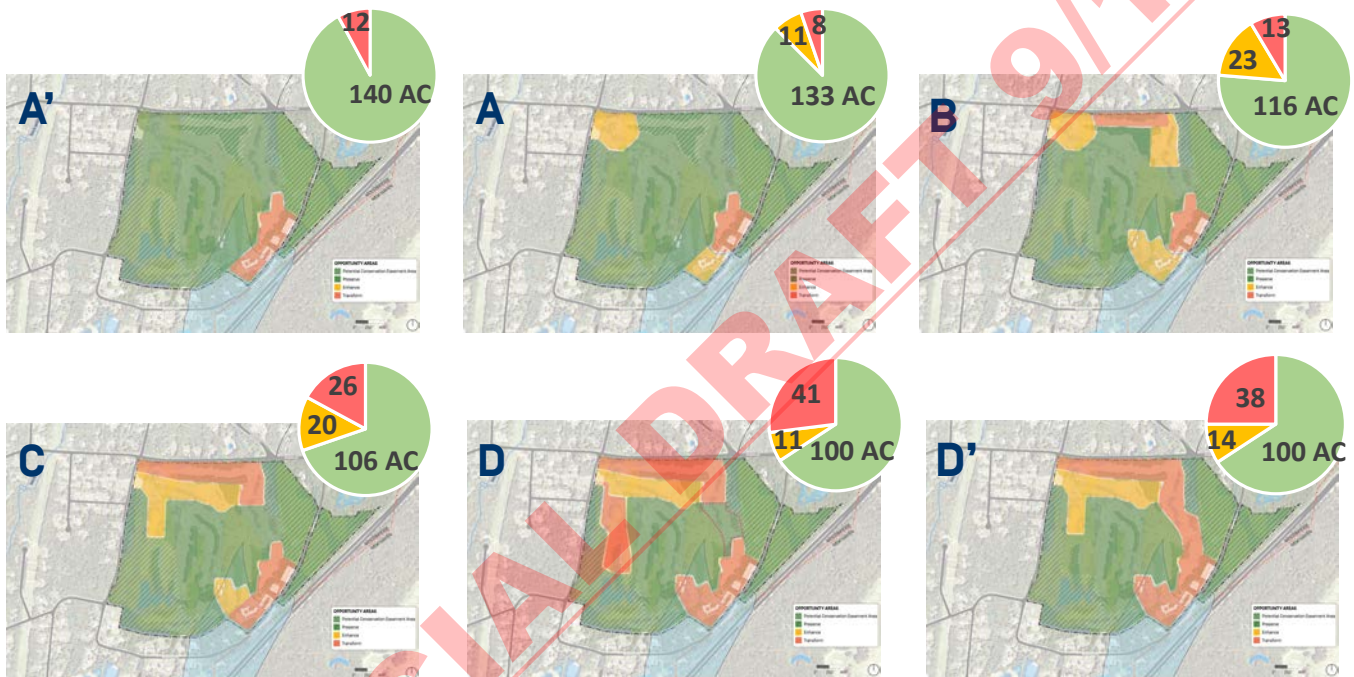
1 Selectman chose Option A'

3 Selectmen chose Option A

4 Selectmen chose Option B

3 Selectmen chose Option C

1 Selectman chose Option D/D'



Land Use Studies were presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 26, 2025.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- Potential Conservation Easement Area
- Preserve
- Enhance
- Transform

As a starting point, the planning team developed a series of opportunity area studies to identify zones across the site where different types of land use—such as preserve, enhance, or transform—might be appropriate. These studies informed a range of conceptual test fits that served as program hypotheticals, illustrating how varying strategies could play out on the site. While not prescriptive, these scenarios were designed to help the Board of Selectmen evaluate potential trade-offs related to scale, character, and cost-benefit—grounding the discussion in tangible examples while leaving room for refinement and community input. The test-fits ultimately led to the preferred land use vision and illustrative plan that serve as basis of the final CCW recommendations.

While the Selectmen expressed a range of opinions on specific uses for the site, there was strong alignment around several key themes: prioritizing green space, allowing for limited development in previously disturbed areas, and incorporating recreation opportunities. Most were open to housing—particularly senior housing—along Ansonia Road, and many supported the idea of a boutique hotel or residential use near the existing clubhouse on Woodfield Road. Several Selectmen also highlighted interest in programs like agro-tourism, affordable housing, and trails. A consistent emphasis was placed on the importance of a cost-benefit analysis to guide community decision-making.



Test Fits based on the Land Use Plans that received the most votes from the Board of Selectmen (A, B, and C) were presented at the Open House on April 2, 2025, and then at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on April 9, 2025.

The Selectmen consistently emphasized maintaining green space, integrating thoughtful development, and the need for a clear cost-benefit analysis to inform next steps.



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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“This property is something for the entire town to increase its sustainability goals: financial sustainability, environmental stability, town wellness and diversity. If we want it to be an asset and not a mistake, we need to think about how the resource can be used for ALL, not just a single demographic.”
- Hillary Drumm, Sustainability Committee Co-Chair

Community Collaboration Woodbridge: The Vision

Derived from community input and the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the proposed Land Use Strategy maintains 93 acres of meadows, wooded areas, and water bodies with an improved network of both natural trails and paved, accessible paths, as well as 23 acres of more densely forested area with trails. The trail network offers connections to regional trail systems.

The Master Plan creates a ceremonial entrance to the Park at the northwest corner of the property, by the intersection of Johnson and Ansonia Road. This area is envisioned to include a new History Trail that showcases the historic Roger Sherman homestead, together with a modest open-air Nature and History Pavilion and interpretive signage, a small new restroom facility, and parking [within the existing parking area only].

The Plan also includes two development zones, one on Ansonia Road that is limited to small, cottage-style development, and one on Woodfield Road at the site of the former Clubhouse which is envisioned as a mix of residential, low-rise assisted living or multifamily housing, and hospitality uses. Developer-built amenities such as tennis, pickleball, or swimming pool could also be made available for community use. The two development areas total 25 acres.

Lastly, a small agricultural site, which could be leased to a farmer for an orchard, berry patch, or farm, provides a place for agritourism, pick-your-own, gathering, and seasonal events.



NORTHWEST GATEWAY

At the corner of Ansonia and Johnson Road, the story of the Roger Sherman Farm is told. Nature is also celebrated here. A small open-air pavilion and public restroom facilities enable this area to serve both new and existing park uses.



HILLTOP FARM

A south-facing slope becomes the home of Hilltop Farm, where an orchard or berry patch could grow. The site will offer picnicking, family farm events and concerts with minimal infrastructure.



WOODFIELD ROAD

The already-developed land along Woodfield Road at the site of the former Clubhouse and surrounding facilities presents an opportunity to build a small but vibrant community, comprising hospitality, restaurant or brewery, and low-rise residential development. Multi-family or assisted living paired with active adult townhomes help to fill a need in the town's residential offerings. Remediation of the existing landscape will augment the health of the surrounding park.



ANSONIA COTTAGE COMMUNITY

Within the north fairway along Ansonia Road, a modest development opportunity exists for cottage-style senior homes, no more than 32 at around 1,000sf.



116 ACRES OF NATURAL PARKLAND

A minimum of 116 acres will be maintained as natural parkland, with an improved multi-use trail network and removal of derelict, unnecessary pavement, structures, and infrastructure that previously served the Country Club.

Site-Wide Recommendations

The following four overarching Site-Wide Recommendations work in concert with one another to deliver the CCW Master Plan Vision.

Each tool plays a critical role in ensuring the Town's priorities are further defined in planning documents and zoning regulations.

Recommendations for each Sub-District are included in the Appendix of this report.

Zoning Overlay District

Purpose: Create a new zoning overlay that supersedes existing zoning and enables the master plan.

Why This Is Needed: The site's existing base zoning does not allow for the combination of uses envisioned. An overlay allows for:

- Clear sub-district distinctions (e.g., D-1, GS-2, AR-1, etc.)
- Stewardship of natural features
- Context-sensitive design controls
- Specific development forms like clustered senior housing or small workforce homes

Process: Planning Consultant works directly with Planning & Zoning to develop regulations in open process that includes the South Central Regional Council of Government and public hearings.

Design Guidelines, Administered by Architectural Review Board

Purpose: Establish a cohesive and comprehensive design manual for the look, feel, and sustainable performance of buildings, landscapes, and infrastructure.

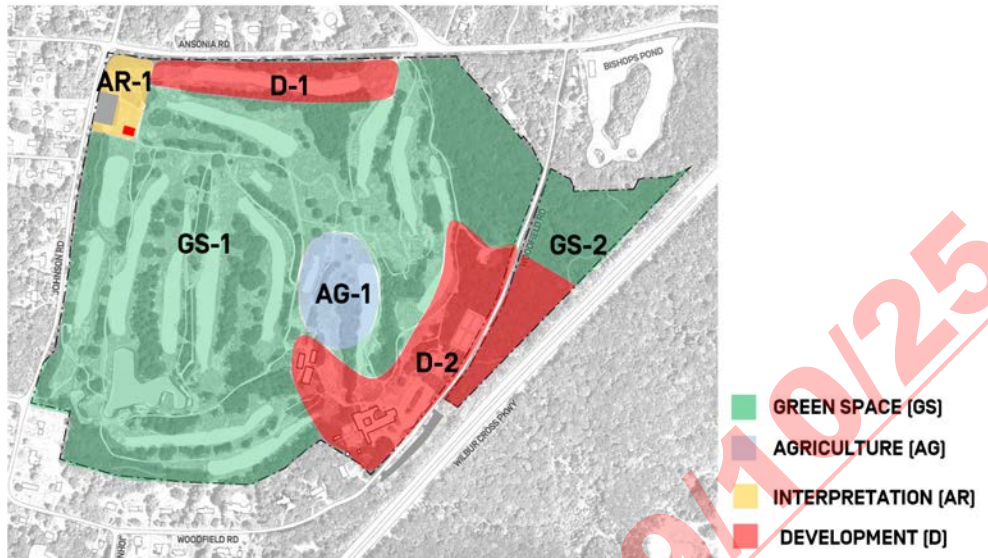
Why This Is Needed: The site will be developed by various parties over an extended timeline.

Guidelines help:

- Maintain Woodbridge's distinctive rural character and agricultural heritage
- Ensure consistency across sub-districts and over time
- Align sustainability goals with local and state guidance

Process: Planning Consultant works directly with Planning and Zoning to develop regulations in open process that includes the South Central Regional Council of Government and public hearings.

“In general, an emphasis should be on developing the property to balance housing, recreation, and open space, resulting in a multi-use property that represents the visions of all residents in Woodbridge; the options presented by your team illustrate this balance.” - Nicole Donzello, CUPOP



Land Management & Stewardship Ordinance

Purpose: Guide long-term ecological and landscape stewardship of publicly accessible open space.

Why This Is Needed: Stewardship goals need further definition to seek funding, program partners and execution. This document would:

- Define funding opportunities and responsibilities for near- and long-term capital projects and ongoing maintenance
- Stewardship strategies addressed, including, but not limited to:
 - * Brownfield remediation and adaptive reuse
 - * Tree canopy preservation and forest health
 - * Invasive species management
 - * Wetlands and other sensitive natural areas
 - * Wildlife habitat protection and ecological connectivity
 - * Community volunteer and educational partnerships

Community Access & Recreation Plan

Purpose: Define detailed program and operational requirements for the site to become a public asset for passive recreation, education, and community life.

Why This Is Needed: Trail networks, interpretive signage, and event spaces require thoughtful layout and ongoing management. This plan would:

- Define operational requirements for community access and recreation programming
- Provide design / engineering documentation for program elements, such as picnic or gathering spaces, interpretive signage, and access points
- Coordinate trail / multi-use path design and alignments with natural features and off-site connections

ALSO CONSIDER:

Conservation Easement or Open Space Covenant

Purpose: Provide permanent, legally enforceable protection of prioritized open space areas.

Why This May Be Desired: While zoning can change, an easement ensures that areas GS-1/2, AR-1 and/ or AG-1 remain protected in perpetuity. Benefits include:

- Enforcement by third-party entities (e.g., a land trust or state agency)
- Potential for tax benefits or grants to the Town
- Transparent and durable preservation commitment

Note: an offer was made in 2021 for \$250,000 total for approximately 140 acres of conservation easement

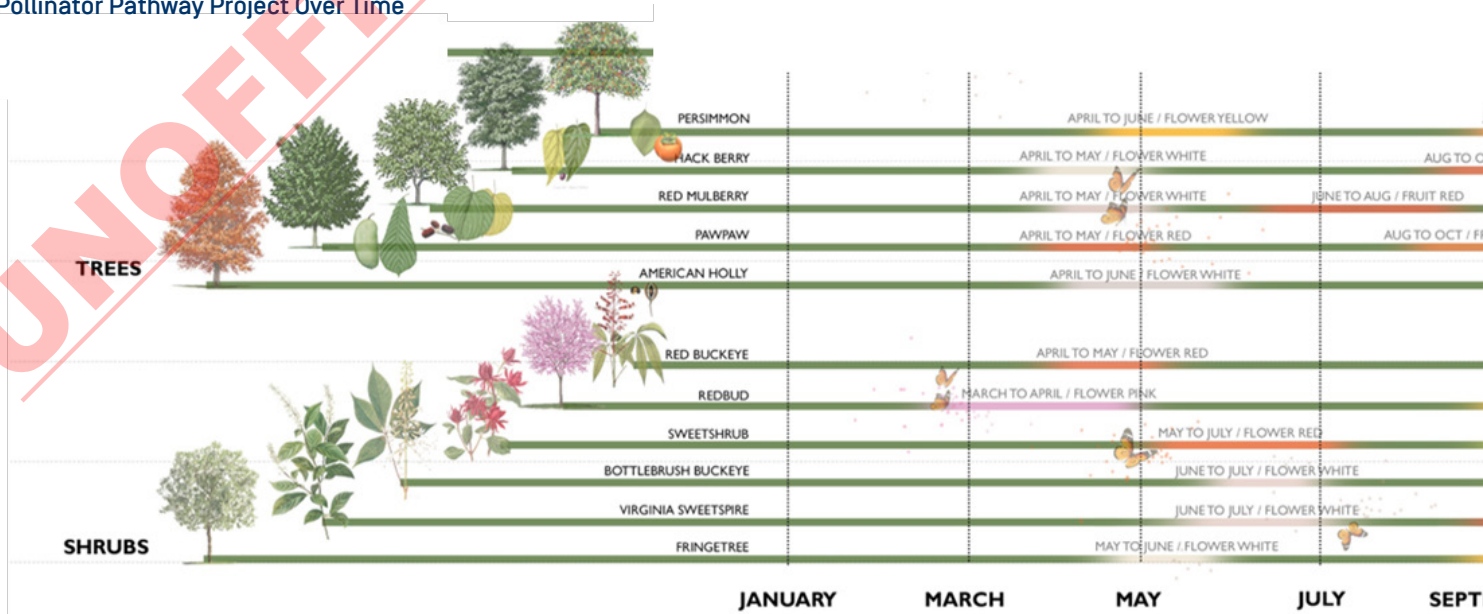
Site-Wide Ecological Recommendations

The open areas of the site offer an opportunity, whether through public investment or volunteer efforts, to steward the transformation of the former golf course into a healthy native landscape.

The goals of this effort are myriad: to improve forest health, manage and retain early successional habitats, encourage the presence of birds and pollinators, address invasives, provide for responsible public recreation, prepare for climate change resilience.



Pollinator Pathway Project Over Time



A review of existing conditions on site as well as reports by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Audubon CT, and the Southwest Conservation District revealed that much of the property is an early successional habitat; this habitat is ideal for birds and pollinators. A large variety of birds will use the regenerating oak, ash, white pines, and cedars to nest. Currently, however, there is a lack of understory and midstory level plants due to deer, and there are significant areas of the site overtaken by invasive plants.

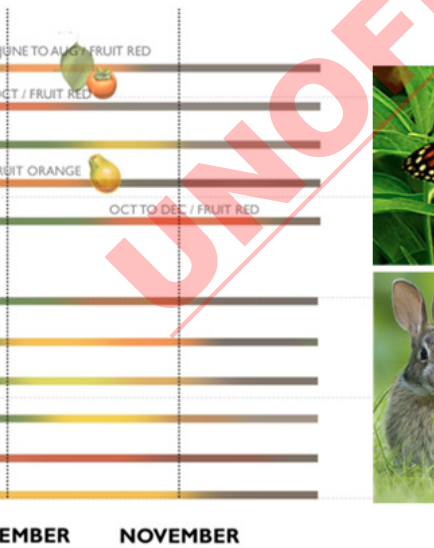
A Southwest Conservation District report recommended a significant and ongoing effort to address invasive species, restore soil quality, and return native plants to the site.

Three restoration areas were identified on site as recommended focal points for enhancement.

- Restoration plans outline a 2-4 years process of identifying and removing invasives through mowing, brush hogging, smothering, and digging out.
- These methods may require an excessive amount of maintenance resources.
- Additional approaches may be employed to remove invasives without requiring intensive monthly care.
- Additional recommendations included restoring soil quality, planting native plant species, and enhancing the surrounding understory/woodlands.

The costs to undertake these projects are substantial. Therefore, this Vision Plan offers a range of approaches from a volunteer-based effort to a full restoration of 17 acres of landscape in the identified areas - including a pollinator pathway, a riparian restoration project, and a pond restoration project.

Grant funding and partnership opportunities are identified in the appendix of this document.



We should go for grants to preserve habitats - plant native trees + plants - save for future generations + our neighboring towns to enjoy.

LAND USE STRATEGY

GS-1 - 93 Acres

Multi-use trails, walking paths and natural areas
Passive recreation
Habitat restoration
Natural water features and stormwater management facilities

GS-2 - 23 Acres

Wooded trails
Stewardship
Potential relocated cell phone tower

AR-1 - 4 Acres

Open-Air Pavilion
Roger Sherman Farm Historic Interpretation Site
Environmental Education
Communal open space
Public Restrooms
Public Parking Area + D-1 Roadway Easement

AG-1 - 6 Acres

Heritage orchard / farm
Open gathering and seasonal programming
Low-Impact agritourism

D-1 - 7 Acres

Compact residential development
5 Dwelling Units/ Acre Maximum

D-2 - 18 Acres

Townhomes, duplexes, low-rise multi-family / assisted living
15 Dwelling Units/ Acre Maximum
Hotel, restaurant, small scale retail
Small-scale outdoor recreation
(i.e. pool, tennis, pickleball)
Walking paths and gardens

ANSONIA RD

AR-1
4 ACRES

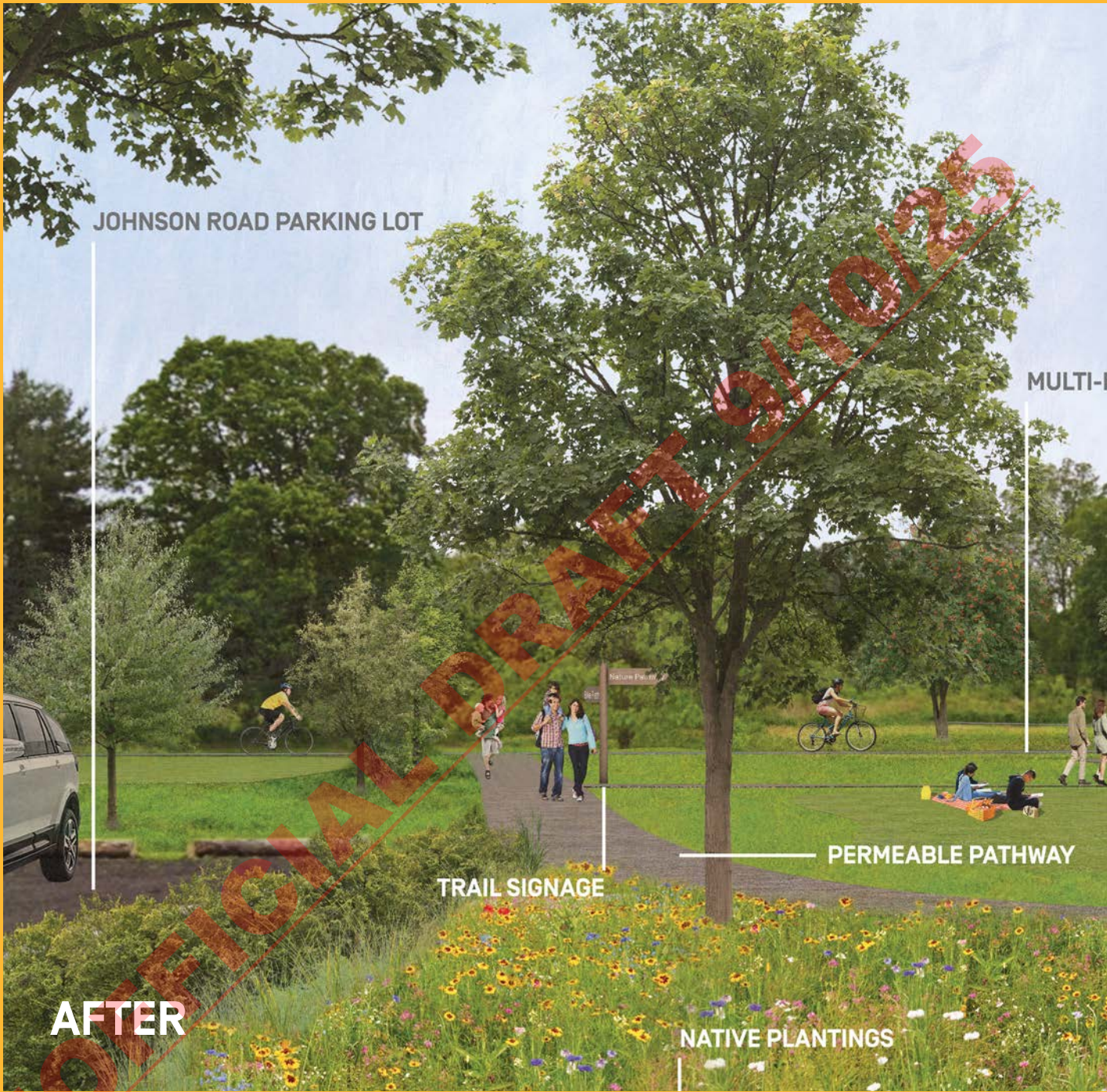
GS-1
93 ACRES

JOHNSON RD

SLED HILL

WOODFIELD RD





JOHNSON ROAD PARKING LOT

MULTI-

AFTER

TRAIL SIGNAGE

PERMEABLE PATHWAY

NATIVE PLANTINGS

NORTHWEST GATEWAY

Celebrating the History & Ecology of the Site

BEFORE



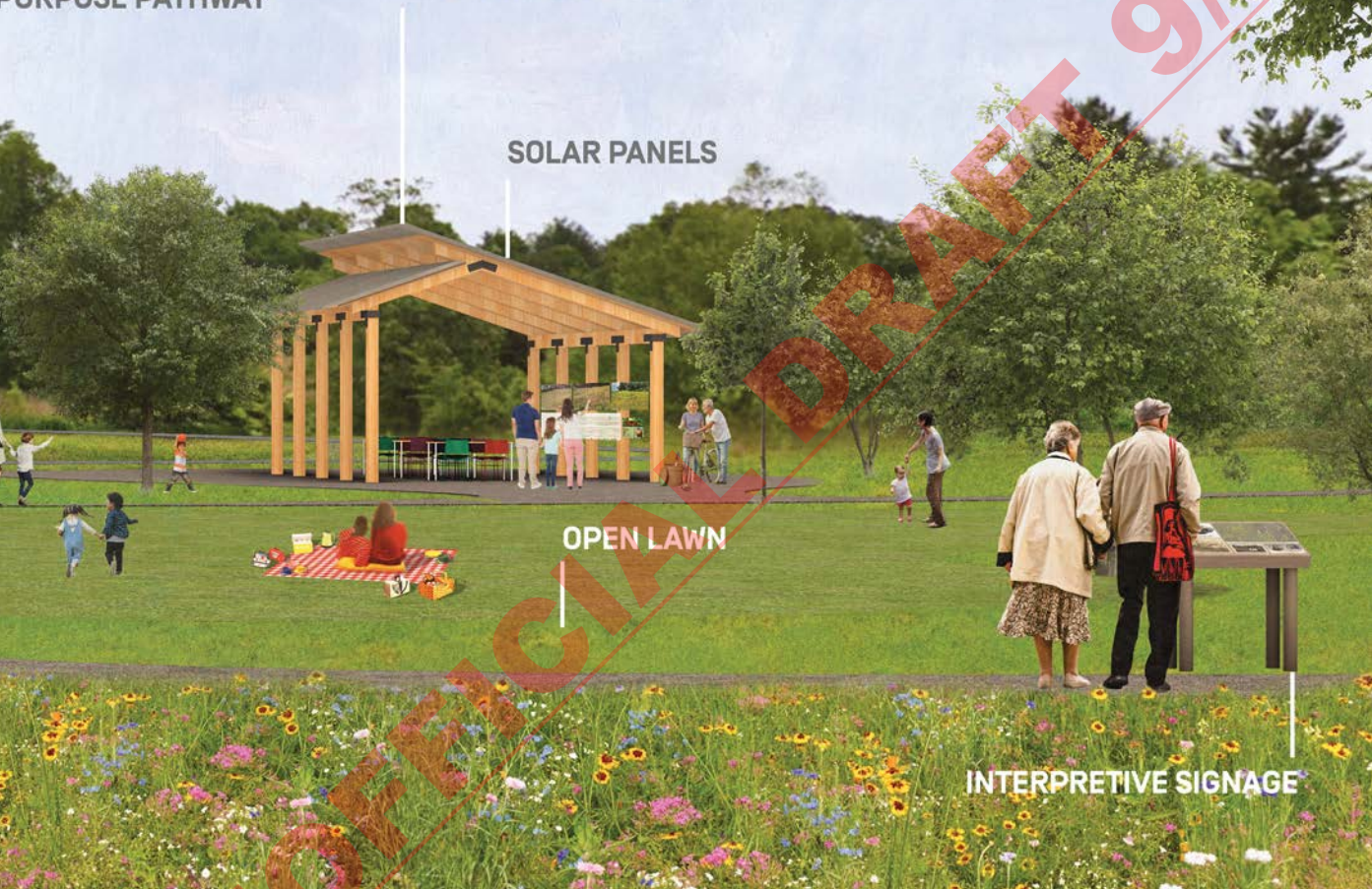
PURPOSE PATHWAY

OPEN AIR PAVILION

SOLAR PANELS

OPEN LAWN

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE



At the corner of Ansonia and Johnson Road, the story of the Roger Sherman Farm is told. Nature is also celebrated here. A small open-air pavilion and public restroom facilities enable this area to serve both new and existing park uses.





APPLE ORCHARD

TRAIL

AFTER

HILLTOP FARM

Where Agriculture and Community Come Together

BEFORE



TEMPORARY STAGE



A south-facing slope becomes the home of Hilltop Farm, where an orchard or berry patch will grow. The site will offer picnicking, family farm events and concerts with minimal infrastructure.



Cost-Benefit Analysis

The Cost-Benefit Analysis represents, at a very high level, fiscal impacts to the town on a one-time and annual basis. The team evaluated four hypothetical options, with construction cost estimating support from Construction Cost Solutions, LLC, and input on municipal costs from the Town and its consultants.

The components of the Preferred and Alternate Plans were determined by consensus by the Board of Selectmen on May 12, 2025.

Note: For purposes of the study, all costs are represented in today's dollars.

PREFERRED PLAN

AR-1 4.39 acres
Recreation, Education, & Interpretation

D-1 7.24 acres
Residential Development 7.24 acres
Senior Cottages 32 units
~880 SF

D-2 18.39 acres
Residential Development 10 acres
Senior Townhomes 24 units
~2,200 SF

Assisted Living (100 units) 99,105 SF
Hospitality Development 8 acres
Inn (40 rooms) 24,250 SF
Banquet Space 2,500 SF
Spa 2,500 SF
Restaurant/ Brewery 3,750 SF

AG-1 5.84 acres
Agriculture (Lease to Farmer) 5.84 acres

GS-1 93.24 acres
Passive Recreation

GS-2 22.92 acres
Passive Recreation

Minimum 10% affordable housing in any development over 10 units.

The Preferred Plan proposes ~120 acres of the property be retained as public woods, meadows, ponds and streams; ~6 acres to be leased to a farmer for a nominal sum; and ~26 acres of development for hospitality and senior housing, including assisted living. **It was found to provide annual net revenue to the Town of approximately \$1.9 million.**

Initial one-time investment by the Town, which could potentially be supported by grants for aspects of the project such as remediation, trails and landscape improvements, and new interpretive elements, was found to be approximately \$4.5 million, while land sale was estimated at \$855,000, resulting in a one-time net cost of approximately \$3.65 million.

Significant town capital costs included in this option:

- trails improvements
- parking improvements
- landscape improvements
- new interpretive paths & signage
- small new open-air pavilion
- new enclosure for portable toilets
- sewer and water upgrades
- environmental remediation
- demolition of Clubhouse
- demolition of foundations
- demolition of pavement
- demolition of pool and surrounding areas

Trails, open space,
Sledding, rec park
but not the
whole
property

If the Town develops 26 acres of the property while retaining, remediating, and maintaining 126 acres, the annual net revenue could amount to between \$1 and \$2 million dollars, depending on the make-up of the development parcels and the extent of ongoing ecological restoration investment in the property.

PREFERRED PLAN WITH ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ZONES

AR-1 4.39 acres
Recreation, Education, & Interpretation

D-1 7.24 acres
Residential Development 7.24 acres
Senior Cottages 32 units
~880 SF

D-2 18.39 acres
Residential Development 10 acres
Senior Townhomes 24 units
~2,200 SF

Assisted Living (100 units) 99,105 SF
Hospitality Development 8 acres
Inn (40 rooms) 24,250 SF
Banquet Space 2,500 SF
Spa 2,500 SF
Restaurant/ Brewery 3,750 SF

AG-1 5.84 acres
Agriculture (Lease to Farmer) 5.84 acres

GS-1 93.24 acres
Passive Recreation 76.24 acres
Ecological Restoration 17 acres

GS-2 22.92 acres
Passive Recreation

Minimum 10% affordable housing in any development over 10 units.

The second option contains the same elements as the Preferred Plan, but includes intensive ecological restoration work on 17 acres of the Town-retained property. **This alternative was found to provide annual net revenue to the Town of approximately \$1.55 million.**

Initial one-time investment by the Town, which (as in the Preferred Plan) could potentially be supported by grants for aspects of the project such as remediation, trails and landscape improvements, and new interpretive elements, was found to be approximately \$5.15 million, while land sale was estimated at \$855,000, resulting in a one-time net cost of approximately \$4.3 million.

In addition to the town costs included in the Preferred Plan, this scenario includes \$648,000 in initial cost and \$341,000 in annual maintenance for the 17 acres of ecological restoration. These costs could potentially be offset by grants.

Woodbridge & the region desperately need housing & this parcel represents one of the few sites where higher density housing can be built. It can be incorporated with beautiful open space.

Meadows and
Grassland are Very
Rare in CT!
Keep them to
Support a
Rare Ecosystem!

It is such
a rare thing
to have open
space - at least
half of it should
be left wild

ALTERNATE PLAN

AR-1 4.39 acres
Recreation, Education, & Interpretation

D-1 7.24 acres
Residential Development 7.24 acres
Workforce Rental Cottages 32 units
~880 SF

D-2 18.39 acres
Residential Development 18.39 acres
Townhomes [Senior] 30 units
~2,200 SF
Workforce Rental Townhomes 28 units
~1,500 SF
Assisted Living [100 units] 99,105 SF

AG-1 5.84 acres
Agriculture [Lease to Farmer] 5.84 acres

GS-1 93.24 acres
Passive Recreation 76.24 acres
Ecological Restoration 17 acres

GS-2 22.92 acres
Passive Recreation

Minimum 10% affordable housing in any
development over 10 units.

Like the Preferred Plan, the Alternate Plan proposes ~116 acres of the property be retained as public woods, meadows, ponds and streams and ~6 acres to be leased to a farmer for a nominal sum. In the ~26 acres proposed for development, this option includes workforce rental cottages and townhomes, as well as senior townhomes and assisted living. **It was found to provide annual net revenue to the Town of approximately \$1.2 million.**

Initial one-time investment by the Town, which could potentially be supported by grants, as in the previous options, for aspects of the project such as remediation, trails and landscape improvements, and new interpretive elements, was found to be approximately \$5.15 million, while land sale was estimated at \$855,000, resulting in a one-time net cost of approximately \$4.3 million.

In addition to the town costs included in the Preferred Plan, this scenario includes \$648,000 in initial cost and \$341,000 in annual maintenance for the 17 acres of ecological restoration. These costs could potentially be offset by grants.

Annual municipal costs for this option include the annual cost to add 30 new schoolchildren to the town. The cost per student used in the analysis was the average of the per-student cost for the Woodbridge and Amity School Districts.

Keep it as
open space.
No housing or
built development

NO DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

AR-1 _____ 4.39 acres
Recreation, Education, & Interpretation

AG-1 _____ 5.84 acres
Agriculture (Lease to Farmer) 5.84 acres

GS-1 _____ 118.87 acres
Passive Recreation

GS-2 _____ 22.92 acres
Passive Recreation

The No Development Scenario represents an option in which the Town retains full ownership of the property, and takes on the cost of basic improvements and maintenance in perpetuity. **It was found to cost the Town of approximately \$3.5 million in initial, one-time costs.**

As in the previous options, initial one-time investment by the Town could potentially be partially offset by grants for aspects of the project such as remediation, trails and landscape improvements, and new interpretive elements.

Additionally, this option was calculated to cost the Town \$139,000 annually. This estimate is for basic maintenance, with no revenue.

Right now this is one
of the most beautiful
open spaces in Woodbridge.
Once it is gone it will be
gone forever. Is it not
worth preserving?



REALIZING THE VISION

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT 9/10/25

Realizing the Vision

As previously described, this Master Plan does not, in and of itself, allow any land sale, conservation easement, or change of use or zoning of the property. A series of steps, each offering new opportunities for the community to guide the direction of the future use of the place, must occur in order to make this Master Plan a reality.

The immediate next step for this effort is to establish a clear and consistent land use policy, including both a new Zoning Overlay District and new overarching Design Guidelines for the site. Both are necessary to enable and maintain control over any future projects, whether public or private.

Concurrent with those legislative actions, the Town can begin planning for investments in remediation, infrastructure, and public space improvements, seeking grants and partnerships as well as considering other funding sources such as a bond. Low-cost “quick wins” can begin to be designed and implemented - for projects such as path improvements, removal of netting and structure from the former driving range, and engagement of volunteers in invasive plant removal, planting projects, and more.

Together, the Town of Woodbridge can realize the vision of this property as a place for all residents to enjoy.

Land Use Policy Updates

As the site is currently zoned Residential A, it is anticipated that to enable the Master Plan’s proposed future uses, the Town of Woodbridge will need to create a Zoning Overlay District in the coming months. The overall goals will be twofold: to enable public projects and to incentivize controlled development where it has been deemed feasible and appropriate.

Additionally, the development and incorporation of Design Guidelines will be an important component of the next phase of work. Successful development guidelines can ensure a level of consistency and coherence across new development projects without being overly prescriptive or constraining. Guidelines of this nature typically focus on the quality of the public experience and address themes such as architectural form, materiality and quality, private street design, private open space design, and sustainable design elements through a principle-based approach.

Staying Involved

Momentum around the future of the Woodbridge Country Club site has continued to grow throughout the year-long master planning process. After so many years without action on this significant Town resource, the time is now for the Town and the community to continue working together to set the stage for long-term development.

In addition to engaging in the upcoming legislative efforts, a number of other ongoing and upcoming initiatives can benefit from the momentum created over the past year, including:

- Get involved in volunteer efforts, such as removal of invasive species and planting of native plants
- Support the formation of a “Friends of” stewardship group
- Participate in public meetings and on-site events
- Spread the word, stay engaged, and make your opinions known!

Quick Wins

Start Small & Build Momentum
Lay the Groundwork for Bigger Moves

Stewardship Volunteer Programs



Action: Create a “Friends of” group to support maintenance and community awareness efforts.

Why it matters: Encourages civic participation and reduces the Town’s management burden.

Timeline: 1-2 months to organize and launch.

Invasive Plant Removal Program



Action: Begin clearing invasive plants in visible areas like trail edges and meadow zones.

Why it matters: Improves site ecology, prepares for native planting, & engages volunteers early.

Timeline: 1-3 months to start; seasonal work ongoing.

Informal Hosted Events (Mutt Strut)



Action: Maintain a limited areas / pathway network to host town-sponsored events.

Why it matters: Reestablishes the site as a space for town programming.

Timeline: Immediate.

Start the Zoning Overlay & Design Guidelines Processes



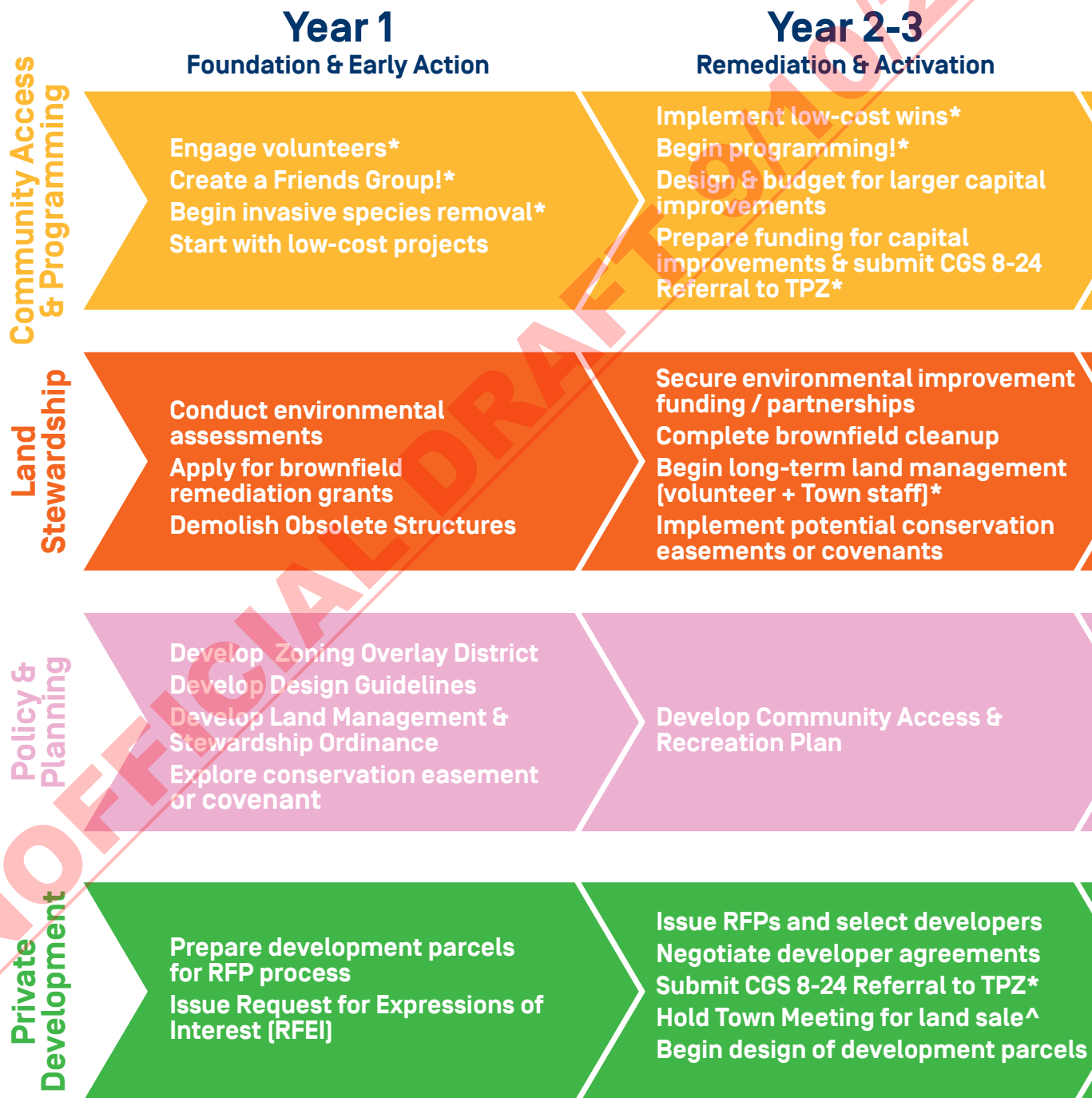
Action: Begin the drafting & public engagement process for the new zoning overlay district.

Why it matters: Sends a clear signal that the Town is planning proactively and transparently.

Timeline: 3-6 months with consultant or staff-led process.

Implementation Roadmap

How Do We Get There from Here?



* Points of community input and participation

^Town meeting with required vote

Year 4

Public & Private Investment

Expand community events & programming*
Construct larger capital improvements

Year 5-6

Full Activation & Maturation

Launch formal programming calendar [guided walks, cultural events, orchard tours]*
Partner with schools and regional nonprofits on education programs

Continue long-term land management

Continue long-term land management

Hold Public Review process*

Achieve design & site plan approvals from TPZ for development parcels*

Development projects complete or near completion
Residents and guests begin to activate site more regularly

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens next?

The next step in the process will be the development of a Zoning Overlay District and Design Guidelines specific to the former Country Club site.

Both will be developed by the Town Planning & Zoning Commission together with the Board of Selectmen in an open process that includes the South Central Regional Council of Government and public hearings.

What will we be voting on, and when?

The Town Charter requires that a Town Meeting be utilized to approve the sale or lease of any Town property exceeding certain budget thresholds. Additionally, any rezoning or development proposals would require public hearings where the community can provide input.

Is this plan a change to the zoning of the former Country Club site?

No. This plan does not, in itself, constitute a change to the zoning of the site. The next step will be the development of a Zoning Overlay District that will allow new land uses to exist on the property.

Will this plan affect my taxes?

No. This plan will not, in itself, affect your taxes. Impacts on taxes in the future will depend on many factors, including whether there is retail, hospitality or assisted living on the site in addition to parkland and / or residential development, which would affect the Grand List and Mill Rate in different ways, as well as whether development leads to new school-age children in Woodbridge, and whether the number of children is sufficient to require more classrooms or resources than currently planned in the Beecher School modernization project. Also, depending on the availability of grants for components of the plan such as infrastructure upgrades or remediation, a bond might be proposed to cover some portion of those costs. Residents will have the opportunity to vote on any potential bond.

How can I continue to make my voice heard in this process?

The plan proposes many opportunities for the community to be involved in the shaping the future of the site, beginning with the formation of a “Friends Of” group that can help with early activation and site investments. The Town Charter also requires that a public Town Meeting be held prior to the potential sale or lease of any portion of the property that exceeds certain budget thresholds. Other points of community input are noted on the previous page in the Implementation Roadmap.

Can developers build as-of-right on the site now that the plan is complete?

No. This Vision Plan simply puts forth a concept for the site, which is still to be borne out through a public and transparent process. The process will include zoning changes, design guidelines, a Request for Expressions of Interest from developers, and, going forward, the opportunity for the Town’s Board of Selectmen to review and negotiate each individual development proposal.

Will there be any new amenities on the site for the public?

YES! The Vision includes environmental remediation, demolition of derelict and unsafe structures, a new park pavilion and public restrooms, and improved walking trails, both unpaved and paved / ADA accessible. All of these improvements will make the property safer, more welcoming, and easier for visitors and residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy. Low-cost, low-impact recreation such as frisbee golf can easily be incorporated as the plan is further developed.

The Vision also suggests requirements for developer-built amenities such as tennis courts, pickleball courts, or swimming pool. Additionally, the proposed agricultural site, which will be leased to a farmer for a nominal cost, will create a place for pick-your-own produce, seasonal activities like corn mazes, pumpkin patches, hay rides, etc., and family concerts and other Town gatherings.

Thank you!

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